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CHFS Employee Profile: Martha Graves – Dedicated Problem-Solver

Meet Martha Graves, Health Policy Specialist II HRSA Program Coordinator. Martha has been with the state 17 years.

Q: How does your job allow you to impact the lives of your fellow Kentuckians?

A: Currently, I work with the Department for Public Health in the Preparedness Branch. This branch is responsible for overseeing that the state is prepared for an event that will affect the health of the citizens of Kentucky. Mark Sizemore and I travel to regional meetings across the state as liaisons between the Kentucky Department of Public Health and the local planning committees. The fun part of my job has been planning meetings and being responsible for parts of the Governor's Pandemic Influenza Summit and meeting some officials from the federal and state governments. Currently, I have been tasked to bring the long term care community into the regional planning groups to share resources and plans for evacuation, should an event occur that would require movement from the facility. Before coming to public health, I worked in Medicaid for 10 years, serving as Long Term Care Branch manager for six years. I set payment rates for facilities before becoming branch manager.



Martha Graves

Q: What do you enjoy about the work you do?

A: I enjoy meeting folks and renewing acquaintances from all over the state while working on these plans. I am still involved with the long term care facilities by collecting survey data and writing a report that is used by long term care planning folks in other states and by the Administrative Hearing Branch. My job duties vary according to the needs and activities of the department and branch. I particularly like to do projects with a beginning and end. I am a problem-solver and like to work out solutions.

** Of Martha's efforts to help those affected by Hurricane Katrina, Charlie Kendall wrote: " One of her most noteworthy activities was to set up without delay a Katrina medical volunteer and evacuee registration phone center. This occurred shortly after Labor Day and continued for several weeks. Ms. Graves developed procedures, worked with IT, trained phone operators and monitored results. She reported activities in many briefings during the period*

to her supervisor, the division director and other executive staff. Her work was tireless, high quality and focused on the needs of the population to be served as well as the many who volunteer to help."

Q: What activities/hobbies/clubs/organizations do you participate in outside of work?

A: Currently, I do not belong to any organizations as a member, but am very active with my four grandchildren who are involved in sports, 4-H, academic team and various other interests. My favorite activity is water aerobics. I try to go at least three times a week, especially in the winter. I travel every chance I get whether it is going to the beach or to a big city for a few days.

Q: If you were given \$100 and you had to spend it today, what would you spend it on?

A: Probably buy a new pair of shoes and have a girls-day-out with my granddaughter – manicure, pedicure and going out to have a fancy tea.

Q: If you could live in any city in the world, where would you live and why?

A: I think I would like to live in Florence, Italy, for about a year. It is one of the prettiest cities I have ever seen. The church bells ring and they are so beautiful that you really don't mind getting out of bed – much better than our alarm clock. You can walk wherever you want to go and the city is so old and just beautiful.

Embrace lessons of African American history

By Emily Moses Mandell

The importance of discovering and honoring our country's history is one that many Americans may dismiss after the annals of high school or college history classes are closed.

But staying in touch with the truth that history reveals in our nation's culture is a process that should be life-long, in order to learn from the past.

That's why this month, we are offering to you the tip of the iceberg of the wealth of e-information that is available concerning African American history.

As February is Black History Month, we hope you will take the time to peruse these sites, which offer glimpses in the lives of some of the state's and nation's most notable African Americans, whose knowledge and fierce determination to overcome racial injustice led to the progression of the ever-continuous battle for civil rights, and moved society toward equality among all American people.

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Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives

<http://www.kdla.ky.gov/researchlinks/blackhistory.htm>

Kentucky African American Heritage Guide

<http://travel.ky.gov/AfAmHeritageGuide/afamwelcome.htm>

Learn how to research African American family history through the Kentucky History Center

http://history.ky.gov/Research/FAQs_African_American.htm

Kentucky Historical Society's oral history project of civil rights movement in Kentucky

<http://catalog.kyhistory.org>

Kentucky Commission on Human Rights

<http://www.state.ky.us/agencies2/kchr/index.htm>

KCHR Gallery of Great Black Kentuckians

<http://www.state.ky.us/agencies2/kchr/ggbk.htm>

Schedule for all of KET's Black History Month specials

<http://www.ket.org/>

Black History Month comprehensive info and links

<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/bhml.html>

NAACP

<http://www.naacp.org/>

African American Scientists

<http://www.kctcs.edu/diversityprograms/scientistsinventors.htm>

Association for the Study of African American Life and History

<http://www.asalh.org/>

Association of Black Women Historians

<http://www.abwh.org/>

The History of African American Military Service

<http://www.redstone.army.mil/history/integrate/history.htm>

Amistad Research Center at Tulane University

<http://www.amistadresearchcenter.org/>

The Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/doughtml/>

Biography Channel Celebrates

<http://www.biography.com/blackhistory/>



Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

The above is a print of 19th Century artist Thomas Kelly's "The 15th Amendment, Celebrated May 19, 1870." The 15th Amendment to the constitution gave African Americans the right to vote.

The History Channel

<http://www.historychannel.com/blackhistory/>

Tax check-off, specialty plate aid Child Victims' Trust Fund

By Anya Armes Weber

You can help teach people across the state about the impact and prevention of child abuse by simply checking a box on your state tax forms.

The Kentucky Child Victims' Trust Fund helps Kentucky's most vulnerable children – victims of sexual abuse – and educates kids and adults about abuse recognition and prevention. By designating part of your tax refund for the program, you can support CVTF programs.



On your Kentucky income tax form, look for the check-off box with the CVTF logo. Choose a set amount to contribute, or write in any other amount you wish to come from your refund or as a donation.

Another way to help CVTF is to purchase an "I Care About Kids" license plate at your county clerk's office.

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Initial cost of the plate is \$38, and \$10 of that goes to the CVTF.

For more information on the license, log onto <http://ag.ky.gov/victims/license.htm>.

For more information about the CVTF, call (800) 372-2551 or (502) 696-5312. Or e-mail CVTF@ag.ky.gov.

The Child Victims' Trust Fund is administered by the Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Board, an independent board established in 1984 and staffed by the Office of the Attorney General. A representative from the Cabinet serves on the CVTF board.

OIG Staff Reaches Out to Troops

By Beth Crace

At one point, the CHFS Office of the Inspector General could count six soldiers with ties to its staff serving in the war in Iraq. Over the past few months, that number has fluctuated, but left a lingering sense of domestic duty among the 300-plus employees of the OIG.

Around October, the staff was invited to donate items that had been identified on a wish list supplied by soldiers' relatives. Employees in the OIG central office as well as OIG regional offices in London, Louisville, Lexington and Hopkinsville, participated, amassing volumes of soaps, shampoos, hand lotions, dried food and powdered juice mixes, among countless other items.

Inspector General Robert J. Benvenuti III said the group even threw in several footballs, some of which were signed by OIG staff, Frisbees and soccer balls.

"This effort is simply reflective of the character of the people who work in the OIG," said Benvenuti.

Since the beginning of the war, relatives, friends, work colleagues and other organizations have sent care packages to soldiers to show support, and supply items – from food to books and magazines – not readily available. Once learning that several soldiers had ties to his staff, Benvenuti encouraged OIG employees to send items as well.

"Because of the sacrifices that you and your comrades willingly undergo, many of us in this office will never have to know what it is like to be separated from home and family," Benvenuti wrote in a letter to the soldiers. "...We may not have it within our means to ease the pain of missing home and loved ones, but we can at least bring a smile to your faces through the contents of this parcel."

In the end, the items collected by the OIG were so numerous they were separated into 25 care packages – enough to fill the office of Staff Assistant Roger Smiley and spill out into the hallway of the OIG headquarters on the fifth floor of the CHFS Building. Smiley said the combined weight of the packages was 485 pounds.

"The people, whether they had military experience or family involved, were all pleased to be helping," said Smiley, who helped coordinate the effort along with Deanna Perkins, Dave Skelton and Jami Biggs.

The packages recently were shipped courtesy of the VFW Post 4075 and American Legion Post 7, both of which donated money to cover shipping costs. One Marine battalion and two Army units, where three relatives of OIG staffers are currently assigned, are set to receive the gifts and have been notified that they are en route.

"... I will be looking forward to the packages," Michael Hamlin, the step-brother of Susan Denney in the OIG's Hopkinsville office, wrote in an e-mail. "Thank you in advance and please tell the others thank you also."

An estimated 80 percent of the OIG workforce took part in the effort, and plans are underway to send more care packages, Smiley said.

"This was a way, instead of doing it piecemeal, that we could send everything together," said Smiley. "We hope to do this again in May."

He encouraged more people to take part in efforts like this one that remind troops overseas they are supported and remembered at home.

Restaurant fund-raiser to help child abuse awareness

By Anya Armes Weber

Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky (PCAK), one of the Cabinet's partners in child abuse awareness education, is teaming with Max and Erma's restaurants to raise money for the group next week.

Present this coupon when you visit the Lexington or Louisville restaurants for lunch or dinner on Feb. 15 and 16, and 20 percent of your ticketed sales will benefit PCAK.

The coupon is valid at Max and Erma's Lexington Hamburg Place location both days and at Louisville's Hurstbourne Road location Feb. 16 only.

Learn more about PCAK online at <http://pcaky.org/>.

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Diabetes agencies promote heart health awareness

The Kentucky Diabetes Prevention and Control Program and the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) are teaming up to let the nearly 21 million Americans with diabetes know they are at high risk for heart attack and stroke.

Heart disease is more likely to strike people with diabetes — and at an earlier age — than it is to strike those without diabetes. In fact, heart disease and stroke account for about 65 percent of deaths in people with diabetes. An estimated 8.5 percent of the adult population, or 267,000 people, in Kentucky have been diagnosed with diabetes.

An additional 109,000 Kentuckians may be living with undiagnosed diabetes. That's a total of 376,000, or 12 percent, of adult Kentuckians who are at high risk of heart attack or stroke because of diabetes.

It is possible to fight back. The risk of heart attack and stroke can be lowered by controlling the ABCs of diabetes.

- A is for A1C. The A1C test measures your average blood glucose (sugar) over the past 3 months.
- B is for blood pressure. High blood pressure makes your heart work too hard.
- C is for cholesterol. Bad cholesterol, or LDL, builds up and clogs your arteries.

The Kentucky Diabetes Prevention and Control Program and NDEP advise people with diabetes to work with their health care provider to better manage their health and prevent heart disease. It's important to check A1C levels twice a year; blood pressure should be checked at each doctor's visit; and cholesterol should be tested at least once a year.

Specifically, a person's A1C level should be below seven, blood pressure below 130/80 and LDL cholesterol below 100. To reach these targets, patients should work closely with their health care provider to put together an action plan of lifestyle changes and medications, if needed, to help reach and maintain goals for the ABCs of diabetes.

Here are some general guidelines to help people with diabetes reduce or lower their risk of heart disease and improve their quality of life.

- Get at least 60 minutes of physical activity, such as brisk walking, most days of the week.
- Eat less fat and salt.
- Eat more fiber — choose whole grains, fruits, vegetables and beans.

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Stop smoking — ask your health care provider for help.
- Take medicines as prescribed.
- Ask your health care provider about taking aspirin.
- Ask others to help you manage your diabetes.

For more information about diabetes, go to the Kentucky Diabetes Prevention and Control Program Web site at www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/ach/diabetes or contact NDEP at (800) 438-5383 or www.ndep.nih.gov.

CHFS Health Tip of the Week **Take steps to avoid burns in the home**

By Anne Parr, R.N.

Nearly 2.5 million burn injuries are reported each year, with more than 75 percent occurring in the home. Children younger than 5 are at the highest risk level, with scalding injuries reported as the leading cause of accidental death of children at home.

It only takes seconds or minutes for a burn or scald to occur, but injuries can last a lifetime. Here are a few tips on how you can help protect your children from burns and scalds:

- Do not let your child play with matchsticks and lighters. Put these out of his or her reach.
- Avoid using tablecloths because your child may tug at them. Hot food and liquids on the table may fall on your child and cause him or her to be scalded. Use placemats instead.
- Do not allow your child in the kitchen when you are cooking. Handles of pots and pans should be turned inward while cooking to prevent a child from pulling or overturning hot items. Use stove guards.
- Keep children away while ironing. After ironing, make sure that the iron and its cord are stored properly to prevent children from pulling the cord and causing the iron to fall and cause a burn.
- Always add hot water to cold water before you bathe your child and not the other way round. This way, if your child playfully jumps into the tub while you are not watching, he or she will not be scalded.

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Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.

If you feel it's time for a confidence boost, take these three steps from the National Association for Self-Esteem.

Try affirmations. Write a statement such as "I like and accept myself just the way I am," or "I believe in myself" on a small card and keep it with you. Read the card both silently and aloud. Repeat the statement several times a day, particularly at bedtime and first thing in the morning. Saying the affirmation gives you positive feelings.

Assess the company you keep. Associate with positive and supportive people, not negative people who constantly put you and your ideas down. Positive people will accept and encourage you, giving you greater self-esteem.

Inventory your past successes. Even small things you've done add up. Remember what inspired you to accomplish each item. This can be a regular monthly or quarterly review to get you feeling good about yourself. Read the list often. Not only will it boost your self-esteem, but it also may motivate you to get more done so you can populate the list.